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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E

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SUBJECT: THE KIBERA SLUM: POVERTY, REFORM, AND THE
DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

UNCLASSIFIED -- ENTIRE TEXT.

¶11. On January 29 and March 10, the Ambassador visited the Nairobi slum area of Kibera (with almost 1 million people, it is the largest slum in sub-Saharan Africa) as part of a continuing series of visits to interact with the people, to support assistance U.S. efforts including by publicizing what the U.S. is doing to help address food shortages, and to promote implementation of the reform agenda. Kibera was plagued by post-election violence.

¶12. The visits included appearances on the local FM radio station, to which we have provided support, and took call-ins from listeners. Callers were very positive about the role that the U.S. is playing to help drive the process of reform. The Ambassador discussed the importance of implementation of the reform agenda, and the relationship between economic and political reforms that will benefit the people of Kibera. He called attention to U.S. assistance efforts through visits to micro-enterprise activities (which benefit 400 persons) and to PEPFAR-supported programs. The Ambassador visited the Kenya Disabled Action Network, which the recipient of a Democracy and Human Rights Fund grant. By visiting Langata High School, he highlighted U.S. support for education through the Ambassador's scholarship fund for girls and boys. The Ambassador held a town hall meeting with community-based organizations; we support and engage with dozens of community-based organizations in Kibera through USAID programs. He conducted outreach through a visit to Toi market and its 5,000 vendors.

¶13. During his March 10 visit, the Ambassador participated in the dedication of a new health clinic in Kibera sponsored by Carolina for Kibera, a remarkable non-governmental organization founded by students at the University of North Carolina. The clinic is an excellent example of public-private partnership, since funds for construction were raised by Carolina for Kibera, while CDC and PEPFAR support the clinic.

¶14. During the visits well-known local artists met the Ambassador and walked with him. The artists, such as &Solo 78 played a significant role in helping to restrain violence, particularly through their graffiti campaign to promote peace and reconciliation. Through our cultural affairs program, the Mission is supporting local film production.

¶15. The extremely warm welcome accorded the Ambassador in Kibera highlights the positive view of the Kenyan people toward the U.S. (Although the U.S. has traditionally enjoyed a high approval rating in Kenya, it has soared to around 90 percent, undoubtedly influenced in part by the election of a "son of Kenya" as perceived by the Kenyan people.) and hope that U.S. leadership can help drive the process of reform.

As at other venues, the Ambassador emphasized that the Kenyan people must exert peaceful pressure for reform. The process must be demand-driven from the Kenyan people, with the U.S. providing strong support.

RANNEBERGER